Society was conferred upon Sir Humphrey Rolleston, Sir Robert Johnstone, and Mr. A. B. Mitchell.

The eighth meeting of the Society was held on Thursday, 24th February, in the Whitla Institute. The president occupied the chair, and Dr. William Moody of London delivered an address, "Child Guidance and Practice." It is hoped to publish an account of this paper in the July number of the Journal.

The annual laboratory meeting of the Society was held in the Institute of Pathology of Queen's University, on Thursday, 3rd March, 1938. A very interesting series of specimens, radiograms, etc., were on view, and a very large number of members took part in the discussions.

H. HILTON STEWART, *Hon. Secretary.*

Malone Road, Belfast.

ULSTER MEDICAL SOCIETY
PRESENTATION OF TWO PORTRAITS

THE annual dinner of the Ulster Medical Society for 1938 was rendered memorable by the presentation to the Society of two portraits, by the president, Professor W. W. D. Thomson. One of these is that of the greatest benefactor the Society has known, Sir William Whitla, and the other that of a distinguished Ulsterman, Sir Hans Sloan, the founder of the British Museum (see ULSTER MEDICAL JOURNAL, January 1938).

Professor Thomson, in making the presentation, said he recalled a former social gathering fifteen years ago, when his wife and he were the recipients of a presentation from the Society on his return from a long illness. In the years which had supervened they had often pondered how they could show they were not unmindful of the past, and he felt a great desire before his year as president had elapsed to make some gesture to the Society indicative of his appreciation. But he was puzzled how to express that gesture until he stood in the National Portrait Gallery before the picture of Sir Hans Sloan, when his difficulties became clear, and he formed the plan of presenting a copy of that portrait to the Society, to remind the profession that the founder of the British Museum had been born in their midst, and to serve as an inspiration to the hundreds of young men who, as Hans Sloan had done, left Northern Ireland to seek fame and fortune in other lands. From that idea sprang a second—that the Whitla Medical Institute should possess a portrait of its honoured donor, Sir William Whitla, which should serve to give a contact with his personality to those who would meet in that hall long after those who knew him in the flesh had passed from the scene.

He was all the more confirmed in his plan when he recalled the words of Sir William Whitla at the opening of the Institute: "When I saw it possible that I could erect this building, and so carry out a day-dream of years, I set about planning how I might, in it, symbolise in art some noble precept or example to

our profession, and leave it here as a help and encouragement to those coming after—something that a weary brother seeing may take heart again."

Hence, continued Professor Thomson, we find the heads of Thomas Andrews, Alexander Gordon, Henry MacCormac, and Peter Redfern cut in the stone bosses on the outside of the building; hence the stained-glass window placed above the mantlepiece in the library in memory of Dr. William Smyth of Burtonport, who gave his life to save the typhus-stricken natives of the Island of Arranmore.

Although a hundred years separated the death of Sloan and the birth of Whitla, yet the juxtaposition of the portraits of these two men is not inappropriate. Both, when mere boys, were attracted to the study of medicine, and arrived strangers and unknown in a great city, served their apprenticeship in an apothecary's shop, and finally, after many difficulties, attained their M.D. degrees. They were both specially interested in the treatment of disease, in drugs and therapeutics, and that both possessed an encyclopædic knowledge of the literature of their period is shown by their writings. Sloan revolutionised the Pharmacopœia of his time as far as the superstition and ignorance of his age allowed, while Whitla's "Dictionary of Treatment and Materia Medica" were standard textbooks to thousands of practitioners and medical students. To both came fame and honours and a great position. Both were shrewd and practical men of affairs and successful in their practice, but generous withal, and many a widow and orphan had reason to call their names "Blessed." They were in all the philanthropic and social movements of their day. Both had an intensely religious strain in their characters, and it is a strange coincidence that to both the Book of Daniel made a strong appeal. In his latter days Sir William spent much time in the attempt to elucidate the hidden meaning of that Book; while Sir Hans chose from its pages the foreword for his great work, "The Voyage to Jamaica"—"Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." It was a happy inspiration which led Dr. Robert Marshall to suggest words from the Book of Daniel as an inscription on the tablet erected to Sir William's memory in Ward 2 of the Royal Victoria Hospital: "Skilful in all wisdom and cunning in knowledge and understanding science"—words equally applicable to the peculiar genius of Hans Sloan.

Both had personal experience of suffering, yet each was granted length of days, and both by their carefully conceived and generous benefactions have given cause to those that come after them to remember them with grateful thanks.

The portrait of Sir Hans Sloan is a copy of the famous portrait which hangs in the National Portrait Gallery, and it was painted by Mr. Clifford Hall, of London. The work was admirably carried out, and the portrait forms a valuable asset to the Institute in which it hangs. It was unveiled by Sir Humphrey Rolleston. It is painted in the difficult technique of glazing transparent colours over solid monochrome, and the accessories worked into the design serve to throw out in marked contrast, the head and figure of the dominating personality of the sitter. Copying a portrait painted in this manner is an exacting task, and Mr. Hall is to be congratulated in the brilliant way in which he has carried out the work.

Mr. Hall describes the portrait as follows :—

Its finest qualities lie in its design. It is built up, in the first place, on a number of opposing diagonals. The main ones from left to right consist of the direction of the lace cravat and of the position of the sitter's arms. The opposing ones from right to left are found in the admirable placing of the hands, in the lines of the partly unrolled drawing, the cloth covering the table, the lower arm of the chair, and the lines of the coat. This arrangement gives an impression of life and alertness.

The dignity of the head with its large wig is further enhanced by the insistence on the curved back of the chair and by the architectural curves of the stone niche in which the statue is placed.

To paint a successful portrait it not an easy task at the best. When the painter is faced with the problem of combining a number of objects and details which, although they suggest, as in this case, the personality and character of the sitter, are not in themselves easy to combine, then the problem is one that can only be solved by a thoroughly good design.

Stephen Slaughter, an Irish artist, who painted the portrait in 1736, has succeeded in solving the problem. That he has taken certain liberties with the drawing is undeniable, but in the main his design is sound and expresses those qualities one would associate with Sir Hans : dignity and a lively intelligence.

The painter has also disposed his telling masses of colour well and on the same diagonal plan. Thus the large expanse of the back of the chair on the left is a dark greenish-blue, and the table-cover on the right, diagonally opposite, is practically the same colour. In a similar fashion, the bright gold of the chair-arm on the left is echoed by the colouring of the mace. The treatment of the head is vigorous and fresh, and the rest of the picture well subordinated to it.

If there were no actual proof that Slaughter's painting is what is popularly described nowadays as "a good likeness," it would not matter. In any case, it is not and never will be the artist's place to compete with the photograph. If he cannot give more than the camera, then he has failed. But when one studies this portrait, one feels certain that the painter has given us something that is in agreement with historical fact; moreover, it has penetration. Perhaps he has delicately hinted, in the expression of the face and poise of the figure, at a slight tendency towards pomposity, but the hint is only a kindly one, for, above all, stress is laid on those characteristics and attainments which made Sir Hans Sloan one of the most eminent men of the eighteenth century.

Sir William Whitla's portrait was painted from photographs by the Belfast artist, Mr. Frank McKelvey, and it was unveiled by Sir Thomas Houston. It shows Sir William seated by a table in a characteristic attitude, and it is a speaking portrait. Sir William's old students testified to the remarkable likeness shown on the canvas, and heartily congratulated Mr. McKelvey on his work. It is painted in the modern direct method, in simple low-coloured tones, with strongly modelled head, characteristic of the man.